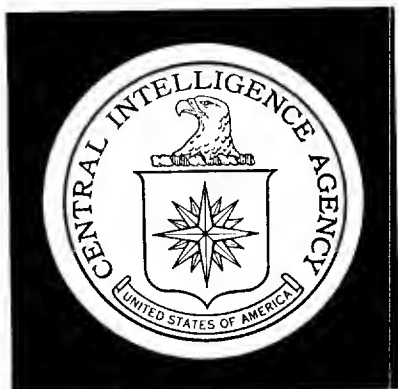


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28 September 1971

25X1

# *Central Intelligence Bulletin*

## CONTENTS

25X1

LIBYA: Speculation on Premier Qadhafi's resignation. (Page 8)

25X1

25X1

25X1

Approved For Release 2003/05/19 : CIA-RDP79T00975A020100060002-0

Next 8 Page(s) In Document Exempt

Approved For Release 2003/05/19 : CIA-RDP79T00975A020100060002-0

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LIBYA: Although there are no outward signs of a power struggle, Premier Qadhafi's long absence from public view has heightened speculation in Libya that he may have stepped down.

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[redacted] Qadhafi has resigned both from the premiership and his position as head of the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), because of his disillusionment with his colleagues and with Cairo. [redacted]

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[redacted] the RCC has been unable to convince him to change his mind and [redacted] Jallud and al-Huni--believed to be the most influential members of the RCC--will succeed to the posts of RCC chairman and premier respectively. Qadhafi reportedly will be allowed to retain his posts as commander in chief of the armed forces and minister of defense.

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Qadhafi may merely be on a rest cure, similar to the absence last March that caused a spate of rumors but brought no substantive changes. The latest rumors, however, have been given added strength by the postponement of the summit meeting of the Federation of Arab Republics (FAR) as well as by the cancellation of the premier's visit to Yemen scheduled for last Saturday. Today is the anniversary of Nasir's death; Qadhafi would be expected to attend the memorial services of the Arab leader he most admired and emulated.

The FAR was founded largely at Qadhafi's urging, and both the other members, Egypt and Syria, have laid their prestige on the line in coming this far toward its completion. The Libyan RCC also has its reputation at stake as a stable government. If the premier actually insists on resigning, it seems likely that both FAR and RCC will exert strong pressure upon him to withhold temporarily the announcement until the ritual of an orderly succession can be arranged.

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Next 2 Page(s) In Document Exempt

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